

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
BEAUMONT DIVISION**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**VS.**

**JOHN STEVEN STARK**

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**CASE NO. 1:12-CR-11 & 1:12-CR-44**

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATION ON GUILTY PLEA  
BEFORE THE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

By order of the District Court, this matter is referred to the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge for administration of the guilty plea under Rule 11. Magistrate judges have the statutory authority to conduct a felony guilty plea proceeding as an “additional duty” pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(3). United States v. Bolivar-Munoz, 313 F.3d 253, 255 (5th Cir. 2002).

On May 3, 2012, this case came before the undersigned magistrate judge for entry of a guilty plea by the Defendant, John Steven Stark, to Count One of the indictment filed in the Eastern District of Texas case number 1:12-CR-11 and Count One of the indictment filed in the Eastern District of Texas case number 1:12-CR-44 (Rule 20 transfer Southern District of Texas case number H12-157 and now), both of which charge violations of 18 U.S.C § 2113(a), bank robbery. In case number 1:12-CR-11, Count One alleges that from on or about January 30, 2012, in the Eastern District of Texas, the Defendant, John Steven Stark, by force, violence, and intimidation, did knowingly take from the person and presence of another, money belonging to and in the care, custody, control, management and possession of Bank of America, 2625 Calder Street, Beaumont, Texas, the deposits

of which were then insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2113(a). In case number 1:12-CR-44, Count One alleges that from on or about February 2, 2012, in the Southern District of Texas, the Defendant, John Steven Stark, did intentionally take, by means of intimidation, money in the approximate amount of \$2,632 from the person and presence of another, said funds belonging to and in the care, custody, control, management, and possession of the Comerica Bank, 3135 Southwest Freeway, Houston, Texas, a bank whose deposits were then insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2113(a).

The Defendant, John Steven Stark, entered pleas of guilty to Count One of both Indictments into the record at the hearing. After conducting the proceeding in the form and manner prescribed by Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11, the undersigned finds:

a. That the Defendant, after consultation with his attorney, has knowingly, freely and voluntarily consented to the administration of the guilty pleas in this case by a United States Magistrate Judge in the Eastern District of Texas subject to a final approval and imposition of sentence by the District Court.

b. That the Defendant and the Government have entered into a plea agreement which was disclosed and addressed in open court, entered into the record, and placed under seal. The Defendant verified that he understood the terms of the plea agreement, agreed with the Government's summary of the plea agreement, and acknowledged that it was his signature on the plea agreement. To the extent the plea agreement contains recommendations and requests pursuant to FED. R. CRIM. P. 11 (c)(1)(B), the court advised the Defendant that he has no right to withdraw the pleas if the Court does not follow the particular recommendations or requests. To the extent that any or all of the terms of the plea agreement are pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(A) or (C), the undersigned advised the

Defendant that he will have the opportunity to withdraw his pleas of guilty should the Court not follow those particular terms of the plea agreement.<sup>1</sup>

c. That the Defendant is fully competent and capable of entering an informed plea, that the Defendant is aware of the nature of the charges and the consequences of the pleas, and that his pleas of guilty are made freely, knowingly, and voluntarily. Upon addressing the Defendant personally in open court, the undersigned determines that the Defendant's pleas are knowing and voluntary and did not result from force, threats or promises (other than the promises set forth in the plea agreement). See FED. R. CRIM. P. 11(b)(2).

d. That the Defendant's knowing and voluntary pleas are supported by an independent factual basis establishing each of the essential elements of the offense and the Defendant realizes that his conduct falls within the definition of the crimes charged under 18 U.S.C. § 2113(a).

### **STATEMENT OF REASONS**

As factual support for the Defendant's guilty pleas, the Government presented a factual basis. See Factual Basis and Stipulation. In support, the Government would prove that John Steven Stark is the same person charged in the Indictments and that the events described in the Indictments

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<sup>1</sup>“(3) Judicial Consideration of a Plea Agreement.

(A) To the extent the plea agreement is of the type specified in Rule 11(c)(1)(A) or (C), the court may accept the agreement, reject it, or defer a decision until the court has reviewed the presentence report.

(B) To the extent the plea agreement is of the type specified in Rule 11(c)(1)(B), the court must advise the defendant that the defendant has no right to withdraw the plea if the court does not follow the recommendation or request.

(4) Accepting a Plea Agreement. If the court accepts the plea agreement, it must inform the defendant that to the extent the plea agreement is of the type specified in Rule 11(c)(1)(A) or (C), the agreed disposition will be included in the judgment.

(5) Rejecting a Plea Agreement. If the court rejects a plea agreement containing provisions of the type specified in Rule 11(c)(1)(A) or (C), the court must do the following on the record and in open court (or, for good cause, in camera):

(A) inform the parties that the court rejects the plea agreement;

(B) advise the defendant personally that the court is not required to follow the plea agreement and give the defendant an opportunity to withdraw the plea; and

(C) advise the defendant personally that if the plea is not withdrawn, the court may dispose of the case less favorably toward the defendant than the plea agreement contemplated.” FED. R. CRIM. P. 11(c)(3)-(5).

occurred in the Eastern and Southern Districts of Texas and elsewhere. The Government would also have proven, beyond a reasonable doubt, each and every essential element of the offense as alleged in Count One of both Indictments through the testimony of witnesses, including expert witnesses, and admissible exhibits. In support of the Defendant's pleas, the undersigned incorporates the proffer of evidence described in detail in the factual basis and stipulation filed in support of the plea agreement, and the Defendant's admissions made in open court in response to the undersigned's further inquiry into the factual basis and stipulation.

The Defendant agreed with and stipulated to the evidence presented in the factual basis. Counsel for the Defendant and the Government attested to the Defendant's competency and capability to enter an informed plea of guilty. The Defendant agreed with the evidence presented by the Government and personally testified that he was entering his guilty pleas knowingly, freely and voluntarily.

### **RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION**

**IT IS THEREFORE** the recommendation of the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge that the District Court accept the Guilty Pleas of the Defendant which the undersigned determines to be supported by an independent factual basis establishing each of the essential elements of the offense charged in Count One of both Indictments. It is also recommended that the District Court defer accepting the plea agreement until the District Court has reviewed the presentence report. Accordingly, it is further recommended that the District Court finally adjudge the Defendant, John Steven Stark, guilty of the charged offenses under Title 18, United States Code, Section 2113(a) in case number 1:12-CR-11 and case number 1:12-CR-44.

The District Court should defer its decision to accept or reject the plea agreement until there has been an opportunity to review the presentence report. If the plea agreement is rejected and the

Defendant still persists in his guilty pleas, the disposition of the case may be less favorable to the Defendant than that contemplated by the plea agreement. The Defendant is ordered to report to the United States Probation Department for the preparation of a presentence report. The Defendant has the right to allocute before the District Court before imposition of sentence. It is recommended that the Court **ORDER** the Defendant's attorney to read and discuss the presentence report with the Defendant, and to file any objections to the report **BEFORE** the date of the sentencing hearing.

### **OBJECTIONS**

Objections must be: (1) specific, (2) in writing, and (3) served and filed within fourteen (14) days after being served with a copy of this report. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 1(a), 6(b), and 72(b). A party's failure to object bars that party from: (1) entitlement to de novo review by a district judge of proposed findings and recommendations, see Rodriguez v. Bowen, 857 F.2d 275, 276-77 (5th Cir. 1988), and (2) appellate review, except on grounds of plain error of unobjected-to factual findings and legal conclusions accepted by the district court, see Douglass v. United Servs. Auto. Ass'n., 79 F.3d 1415, 1417 (5th Cir. 1996) (en banc). The constitutional safeguards afforded by Congress and the courts require that, when a party takes advantage of his right to object to a magistrate's findings or recommendation, a district judge must exercise its nondelegable authority by considering the actual evidence and not merely by reviewing and blindly adopting the magistrate's report and recommendation. See Hernandez v. Estelle, 711 F.2d 619, 620 (5th Cir. 1983); United States v. Elsoffer, 644 F.2d 357, 359 (5th Cir. 1981) (per curiam).

SIGNED this 4th day of May, 2012.

  
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Zack Hawthorn  
United States Magistrate Judge